Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-30 (Canceled).

31. (Original) A method of converting sheet material into a dunnage product, comprising the steps of:

using a forming assembly for shaping the sheet material into a continuous strip of dunnage including a three-dimensional shape; and

using a pulling assembly positioned downstream from the forming assembly for advancing the sheet material through the forming assembly;

wherein the step of advancing the sheet material includes moving grippers together through a transfer region in opposition to one another to cooperatively grip therebetween the dunnage strip and advance the dunnage strip through the transfer region, while an aperture in at least one of the grippers gathers and laterally captures therein the dunnage strip as the grippers are moved through the transfer region.

32. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the step of capturing the strip of dunnage between the opposing grippers includes deforming opposite sides of the strip of dunnage.

33. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the step of moving the grippers together includes moving the grippers through the transfer region in longitudinally offset yet paired relation for gripping and advancing the strip of dunnage.

34. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the opposing grippers transversely overlap while advancing the strip of dunnage.

35. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the grippers are arranged in transversely opposed sets of grippers disposed on opposite transverse sides of the transfer region, and the step of moving the grippers includes progressively moving the grippers towards one another at an upstream end of the transfer region and

progressively moving the grippers away from one another at a downstream end of the transfer region.

36. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the pulling assembly further includes a set of transfer assemblies having connected thereto the respective sets of grippers, and the step of moving the grippers includes ~~moving the~~ using the transfer assemblies to move the grippers toward each other at the upstream end of the transfer region to transversely engage the strip of dunnage and away from each other at the downstream end of the transfer region to release the strip of dunnage.

37. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 36, wherein the step of moving the grippers includes moving the grippers along a non-circular path in opposite relation to one another and, as the grippers move along the non-circular path in opposing relation, sequentially transversely engaging the strip of dunnage therebetween on opposite sides thereof for advancing therewith the strip of dunnage.

38. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 37, wherein opposing grippers moving downstream of the non-circular path release the strip of dunnage substantially simultaneously with or after opposing grippers moving along the non-circular path, upstream of the non-circular path, transversely engage the strip of dunnage.

39. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 37, wherein opposing grippers moving downstream of the non-circular path release the strip of dunnage substantially simultaneously with or after opposing grippers moving along the non-circular path, upstream of the non-circular path, advance the strip of dunnage.

40. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 36, wherein movement of the flexible transfer assemblies is synchronized.

41. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the step of using the forming assembly includes guiding the strip of dunnage through a constriction member at an upstream end of the forming assembly thereby guiding the strip of dunnage from a downstream end of the forming assembly to an engagement region between the opposing sets of grippers.

42. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein the grippers are arranged in transversely opposed first and second sets of grippers connected to respective first and second gripper carriages disposed on opposite transverse sides of the transfer region; and

wherein the step of advancing the sheet material includes moving longitudinally the first set of grippers along a first non-circular path and moving longitudinally the second set of grippers in synchronous relation to the movement in the first set of grippers along a second non-circular path; and

wherein portions of the first and second paths are juxtaposed to define therebetween the transfer region and wherein the step of advancing the sheet material further includes transversely engaging the strip of dunnage on opposite sides thereof between at least one gripper of the first set of grippers and at least one gripper of the second set of grippers for advancing the strip of dunnage through the transfer region.

43. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 42, wherein the transfer region comprises an engagement region whereat the first and second non-circular paths converge toward one another, an advancement region whereat the first and second non-circular paths are substantially parallel to one another, and a release region whereat the first and second non-circular paths diverge away from one another.

Claims 44-57 (canceled).

58. (Original) A void fill dunnage product comprising: a three dimensional crumpled strip round in cross-section and including at least one ply of sheet material having, in cross-section, a crumpled multi-lobed undulating body, with the lobes thereof extending longitudinally and being dispersed in an irregular pattern.

59. (Original) A dunnage product as set forth in claim 48, further including at least one transverse crimp on opposite transverse sides of the strip of dunnage, which crimps are longitudinally offset from one another.

60. (Original) A dunnage product as set forth in claim 48, wherein one or more cross-sections of spaced portions of the strip of dunnage are deformed.

61. (Original) A method of producing a dunnage product, the method comprising the steps of:

supplying a sheet material having at least one ply;

causing inward folding of the lateral edges of the at least one ply of sheet material whereby a three dimensional crumpled strip of dunnage of generally round cross-sectional shape is formed, with at least one ply of sheet material forming, in cross-section, a crumpled multi-lobed undulating body, the lobes thereof extending longitudinally and being dispersed in an irregular pattern.

62. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 44, further including the step of regularly transversely crimping the strip of dunnage on opposite sides thereof, the crimping on one side being longitudinally offset from the crimping on the opposite side thereof.

63. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 44, wherein the step of causing inward folding includes using a pulling assembly for pulling the strip of dunnage through a constriction member to both narrow the strip of dunnage via three dimensional crumpling thereof and to guide the strip of dunnage to the pulling assembly.

64. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 44, further including the step of deforming one or more cross-sections of spaced portions of the strip of dunnage.